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SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/747-E/1995/126) on the proposed merger of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). During the consideration of the report, a representative of the Secretary-General provided additional information to the Advisory Committee.

2. The report of the Secretary-General is prepared in response to the request contained in paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 49/160 of 23 December 1994.

3. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 49/160, the General Assembly requested the Economic and Social Council to re-examine the issue, at a resumed session to take place after the Fourth World Conference on Women and before the Third Committee of the General Assembly considered the item on the advancement of women at the fiftieth session.

4. In paragraph 6 of the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to take a final decision on the proposed merger at its fiftieth session "taking into account the recommendations made by the Economic and Social Council and the

deliberations of the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-ninth session and of the Fourth World Conference on Women concerning the institutional arrangements in the United Nations system for the advancement of women".

5. The Advisory Committee points out that the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/747-E/1995/126) does not specify what was the result of the deliberations of the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-ninth session and of the Fourth World Conference on Women concerning the institutional arrangements in the United Nations system for the advancement of women. The Advisory Committee draws attention to the fact that the deliberations in the Commission and in the Conference are among the prerequisites set by the General Assembly for re-examining the issue by the Council and for a final decision of the Assembly on the issue.

6. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 1 of chapter II, "Preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace", of the report of the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-ninth session, 1/ that the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed merger of INSTRAW and UNIFEM (A/49/217-E/1994/103) was made available to the Commission. Paragraphs 334 and 335 of chapter V, "Institutional arrangements", of the report of the Fourth World Conference on Women 2/ and paragraphs 76 to 80 of the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the Conference (A/50/744) refer to the mandates of INSTRAW and UNIFEM and activities to be undertaken by both organizations for the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted by the Conference.

7. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in its report of 7 September 1994 on the proposed merger (A/49/365), the Committee raised a number of administrative and budgetary issues which needed further clarification. Additional information on these issues is contained in paragraphs 11 to 21 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/747-E/1995/126). In the course of its review of the additional information, the Advisory Committee came to the conclusion that the issues raised in the Committee's previous report (A/49/365) remain yet to be responded to and substantiated in detail; these include among the longer-term perspective of the merger a clear analysis of the financial benefits resulting from the merger and of the relative advantages and disadvantages of the two locations.

8. In this connection the Advisory Committee also recalls that the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has outlined in its decision 95/18 of 14 June 1995 specific steps that the Administrator of UNDP must take to address UNIFEM's financial and administrative situation, such as a further reduction in the administrative expenditure to a level more consistent with the resources for UNIFEM's projects. The Committee raised this issue with the representative of the Secretary-General and was informed that the financial situation of UNIFEM was not directly relevant to the merger, since under the proposal the two funds would not be mingled.

9. As can be seen from paragraph 7 above, the Advisory Committee received little that is new on the subject of administrative and financial arrangements. Moreover, the Advisory Committee points out that neither the Commission on the

Status of Women nor the Fourth World Conference on Women has specifically addressed the question of the proposed merger. It is the opinion of the Advisory Committee that this issue is not merely related to administrative and budgetary arrangements; rather it requires a policy decision as to whether the proposed merger should be implemented.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 6 (E/1995/26).

2/ A/CONF.177/20.